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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA, NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/WATERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/25/2017
TAGS: [IS](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: CODEL ISSA MEETS WITH YASER ABED RABBO

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Begin Summary. PLO Executive Committee Secretary General Yaser Abed Rabbo told CODEL Issa June 24 that the government of PM Salam Fayyad, if successful, could lead to the creation of a new political current, mobilize disaffected voters, and weaken HAMAS. He accused HAMAS of trying to institute one party rule and an Islamic society in Gaza. Warning that HAMAS could strike out as it becomes more isolated, he called for diplomatic isolation that avoids a humanitarian crisis or Israeli military action. He also said the PA will investigate HAMAS-linked NGOs, in order to weaken its social network. End Summary.

Fayyad: The Great Technocratic Hope

¶2. (C) In a June 24 meeting with Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) and the Consul General, PLO Executive Committee Secretary General Yaser Abed Rabbo said the new PA government led by PM Salam Fayyad represents a great opportunity to give hope to the many Palestinians who support neither HAMAS nor Fatah. He said many people can potentially be brought into the political system as supporters of an independent third party and pointed to a recent An-Najah University poll that showed 72% support for PM Fayyad. Abed Rabbo said it is important to strengthen Fayyad and his government to give them the chance to build up support. He said there is still a danger that elements within Fatah will work to undermine Fayyad to increase their own political power, and he is working to prevent this.

Isolation: Yes

¶3. (C) Abed Rabbo accused HAMAS of planning to institute one party rule in Gaza, while building a "Taliban-like" Islamic society. He rejected HAMAS' recent statements proposing dialogue with President Abbas and calling for calm with Israel. He said such statements are an attempt to reduce international pressure on HAMAS. He described HAMAS as "a snake that had swallowed a cow", saying HAMAS cannot solve Gaza's economic and social problems without international assistance and Israeli coordination. Abed Rabbo said HAMAS is part of an international conspiracy that includes Qatar, Syria, Iran and Hizballah, all of whom were aware in advance of HAMAS's plans in Gaza. He called for HAMAS to be isolated diplomatically, economically and socially and said he opposes any international contacts with HAMAS. Abed Rabbo called HAMAS's takeover of Gaza a "historic error" and said HAMAS must be made to "pay for it." He also warned that the present situation is dangerous, and HAMAS is likely to strike out violently in response to internal and external pressure.

War and Starvation: No

¶4. (C) Abed Rabbo said the PA needs to work with the Israelis now to coordinate on security in order to weaken HAMAS in the West Bank. He warned, however, that a large scale Israeli military attack on Gaza will only strengthen HAMAS politically and weaken Abbas and Fayyad. He said a humanitarian crisis in Gaza will have the same terrible result. Asked by Rep. Issa how the PA can prevent support for Gazans from benefiting HAMAS, Abed Rabbo said the PA must isolate Gaza financially and pay only public sector employees who are loyal to the PA.

Challenging the Culture of HAMAS

¶5. (C) Abed Rabbo said HAMAS has infiltrated the education system and the religious establishment. He said Fatah never understood the importance of culture and failed to respond to HAMAS in these areas. Abed Rabbo said the new government must limit HAMAS's role in civil society and will begin by investigating Hamas-linked NGOs and charities.

¶6. (U) CODEL Issa did not have the chance to clear this cable.
WALLES